

In Safe Hands

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Summary: Astrid has always loved Hiccup's hands. [SPOILERS FOR HTTYD 2!] Pure, indulgent fluff a tiny missing scene. Hiccstrid, obvs.

In Safe Hands

Inspired by an art prompt I saw on Tumblr. **SPOILERS**** FOR HTTYD 2 AHEAD!**

Title: In Safe Hands

Length: Oneshot (complete)

Characters: Astrid, Hiccup [Hiccstrid]

Summary: Astrid has always loved Hiccup's hands.

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><p>Astrid has always loved Hiccup's hands. It was one of the first things she'd noticed about him once they were both out of childhood, even after she'd dismissed the rest of him as beneath her attention. His hands were interesting. So much more graceful and assured than the rest of him, surprisingly deft as they worked leather and iron into shapes that were both useful and beautiful. Contradictions, with fingers long and slender, but blunt-tipped and calloused with hard work. Short nails, kept clean somehow despite the grime of the forge (and not bitten like her own).<p>

They are sometimes the most expressive part of him. Like his father he gestures often when he talks, but it is sometimes the littlest movements that tell her the most—the way they smooth invisible wrinkles in his clothing when he's nervous, or idly twirl a pencil between his fingers when he's thinking too hard. He shows affection with his hands, too: subtly, a light touch on Astrid's arm, little

circles rubbed absently against Toothless's scales.

Astrid likes holding his hand. It's a good way to get him to stop thinking too hard or catch his breath during a rant. Even at his most preoccupied or irritable, he lets her do it, so she knows he likes it too. He might pause to give her a grateful (or exasperated) look, but then he always continues working or drawing or talking with his free hand while allowing her to keep hold of the other.

On the day his father dies, after he's made his speech and they make their way back to the dragon sanctuary to right what wrongs they can, she takes his hand. He returns her grip fiercely. His hand is cold and, though his face is set now and the tear tracks dried, she can feel tiny tremors running through it. She looks down and finds that it is pale, and covered in fresh cuts and scrapes from the battle, much like her own. His fingertips, though—she sucks in her breath. They are blistered, a deep angry red. Burned.

Her heart lodges itself in her throat as she realizes how close they came to sending off a different person on that ship. A few seconds later, a few inches closer, and he would have been gone. Burned. She shivers.

Hiccup notices her reaction and his hand tightens around hers. "It's fine," he says. His voice is hoarse.

It isn't, but she knows better than to try arguing. She can't speak anyway. So instead she brings them to a halt and, scooping up a small pile of snow with her free hand, rearranges their grip so that she can pack the snow around his fingertips. Her own fingers prickle with the cold, but the grateful smile he gives her makes it worth it.

Astrid moves closer so their shoulders bump together as they walk, as much for her own comfort as for his. She has to stop and replace the snow often as it melts, but by the time they reach the sanctuary some of the angry redness is gone and his fingers must be as numb as hers. They pause at the rear of the group, collecting themselves for what is ahead, and he gives her hand a firm squeeze. The numbness fades away at once and warmth spreads across her palm.

This is why she loves Hiccup's hands: they are an extension of himself. Calloused and scarred because he works tirelessly, fearlessly to maintain peace between dragons and Vikings. Strong in a way that belies appearance, holding a sword as easily as a pencil. Clever and quick, like his mind, which never fails to find a solution to whatever problem they face. Gentle and warm, a reflection of the kindness and humor that are his greatest strengths.

And blistered, now, because he was willing to gamble with his life for the sake of his beliefs—but was too loved to be allowed to make that sacrifice.

They are the hands of a leader. A Chieftain. In them rest the fate of their home, their dragons, and all that they have worked for these past five years.

Astrid grins. His hand is firm and solid around her own, the tremors gone, injuries forgotten. She can't think of a safer place to be.

End
file.